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ALBERTA

1966

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER



THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

The Honourable A. O. Aalborg,
Minister for Personnel Administration.

Honourable Sir:

I have the honour to submit herewith the Report of the Public Service Commissioner for the year ended December 31st, 1966.

The major accomplishments were:

- the adoption of the principle of delegation of authority for the personnel function to the operating level of management
- the negotiation and installation of a revised Pay Plan six months in advance of the termination of the former agreement
- the definition of the bargaining unit for the purpose of negotiating a full collective agreement
- the isolation of negotiable issues pursuant to Part 2 of The Public Service Act
- the introduction of a new approach to securing position information
- the delegation of authority to the Department of Public Welfare for the recruitment and selection of Social Workers
- the introduction of the Technical Institute Bursary Program
- the initial planning and design of a Manpower Utilization Program

These and other developments in the personnel program are outlined and reviewed more fully in this report.

Your obedient servant,

Public Service Commissioner.

KJR:dh

1966 IN RETROSPECT

1966 will go down as "a year to remember" and although we gained substantially in many areas, the year was fraught with new problems and difficulties.

The year will be remembered across the breadth of the country, if not throughout the western world, as a year of extreme labour unrest. The impact of labour strife characterized by the inability of labour leaders to exercise their influence with their members, the considerable salary increases in several key occupations, the threats arising from still unsettled contracts all had an effect on the public service sector as well.

To an increasing degree, public employees at the provincial and federal levels of government are demanding and receiving a fuller voice in the determination of their wages and working conditions. Most provinces have some form of collective negotiation either in effect or under active study. The federal government seems determined to provide almost a full measure of collective bargaining in its proposal which is currently before parliament.

We are fortunate in Alberta, principally due to the exceptional climate of employer-employee relations which has existed for a very long period. However, notwithstanding this fine relationship, a situation did develop in an area of the Province which caused much concern and precipitated a total review of the pay plan agreement six months in advance of the scheduled date. In retrospect, while the incident referred to certainly triggered the pay review, it can be said that because of what was taking place all around us, our situation was becoming more difficult and may have led us into an early review anyway.

We have made adjustments in order to deal more effectively with these trends in public personnel administration. These are dealt with elsewhere in this report.

As we turn the corner into 1967, we look back on a year that caused us concern but gave us challenge, that caused frustration but gave us satisfaction, and though the signposts are not too clear at this point in 1967, they do indicate that we may face a levelling off in the economy. Unquestionably we will still face shortages of staff in many areas.

PERSONNEL FUNCTION IN TRANSITION

It is the policy of the Government of Alberta to delegate to departmental management the authority for personnel decisions within the limits of service wide uniform standards and to secure departmental participation in the setting of these standards.

In our report last year mention was made of the definite trend toward a greater measure of decentralization in public personnel administration. The major reasons for this trend are:

- patronage, the main reason for the creation of the traditional public personnel systems, is no longer a problem. As a direct result administrative processes tend to be too cumbersome and extend the interval between the commencement and conclusion of important personnel transactions.
- operating officials are entitled to say more in matters directly affecting their employees. Consequently supervisors, who must understand and administer personnel policies and procedures at the local level should have enough of a stake in the personnel program to understand and appreciate its basic tenets, and identify with it as they must.

In the year under review, we gave as much attention to this problem as time would permit and we entered the new year with definite plans to continue to reshape the program in such a way as to make it more effective in meeting today's demands.

Actually our program has been in a state of evolvement since its inception as a comprehensive personnel system in 1960. At that time, in accordance with the advice of our consultants, the old Public Service Commission as we knew it was abolished in favour of the "integrated system". Under this system day to day administration is the responsibility of the Public Service Commissioner who has the status of a Deputy Minister and reports directly to the member of the Executive Council assigned responsibility for personnel administration. The Public Service Act which was enacted in its modern form in 1962 modified the authority for this system. As well, the act provides for the delegation of authority in certain key areas of the program.

Last August discussions were held with the Minister and as a result the Government reached the decision to accelerate the decentralization of the program in a planned and orderly manner. The following reasons were advanced in support of this decision:

- The advent of collective negotiation, and the need to administer a collective agreement, bring into sharp and immediate focus the need for the full involvement of the local supervisor and the departmental personnel officer.

- The growth and complexity of the service has reached the point where the program, centralized as it is, is too remote from the day to day problems to deal effectively with problems as they arise.
- In this day and age, good communication with the work force is a necessity. This can only be accomplished effectively by departmental officials through their fuller participation in the personnel program.

A further and equally important reason for decentralization, is that the specialized resources of the central personnel office can ultimately be concentrated to develop new and necessary extensions of the program. Extensions now in operation or in the planning stage include:

- a comprehensive manpower planning program is being designed to project manpower needs as an aid to the recruitment and selection process and as an aid to budgeting and program evaluation. Planning for this program is well advanced.
- a management advisory services program is proposed to assist operating departments to evaluate and improve administrative procedures. Assistance can be provided in the analysis and modification of organizational units. The requests from the departments for this type of assistance is most encouraging and indicative of their desire to improve efficiency and reduce costs.
- for a long time we have hoped to develop better methods for controlling the establishment. We have been handicapped in this respect by lack of qualified analysts who can bring modern techniques to work measurement and work distribution to bear on this problem. It is hoped some initial work and planning can be made in the year ahead.

- we should be in a better position to offer assistance to outside boards and agencies. While we have no desire to directly extend our influence to these entities, we do feel that there needs to be more collaboration. They are in the public service sector and will ultimately be required to enter into collective agreements with the Civil Service Association of Alberta. Most of them adopt the standard civil service rules, offer the same general benefits and attempt to maintain their salaries on the same general level. In the past we have helped two of these agencies to develop comprehensive personnel systems and they operate these effectively on their own. Obviously, with collective negotiation in the offing, close collaboration is quite essential.

The reports of the various divisions of the Personnel Administration Office will indicate that substantial strides have already been made in many of the areas noted above. We have been fortunate in securing the services of Mr. John R. Ife who will be returning for a limited period. His major assignment will be planning and he will concentrate his efforts on the above re-shaping of our program. It is expected that several years will be needed to fully attain our goals. The principle problem is one of staffing and training particularly at the departmental level and this will take some time to overcome.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

It is the policy of the Government of Alberta to recognize the rights and aspirations of the employees in a meaningful way by providing a basis for collective negotiation, and to recognize as well the value and benefit of joint discussion of common problems conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

While not all of the objectives we set for ourselves were achieved in 1966, some notable advances were made.

Early in the year a series of meetings was scheduled with representatives of the Civil Service Association at which the whole range of topics relating to the forthcoming collective agreement was discussed.

At these meetings general accord was reached on the question of isolating those items that can properly be considered as coming within the scope of the agreement. Generally speaking all of the civil service regulations that relate to minimum or basic employee rights and benefits will be included in the agreement. Not included of course are items judged to fall within the sphere of "managerial prerogatives" or those areas of civil service rules where discretion is permitted the supervisor in determining the course of action in specific cases.

Currently all civil service regulations are in the traditional format, and basic and discretionary regulations are included together. When the agreement has been concluded, all of these regulations which remain will be rewritten into a "management manual" and guidelines will be developed in an effort to achieve uniform application. This will be a considerable undertaking.

Our "agreement" discussions also resulted in our joint approval of the positions to be formally excluded from the operation of the collective agreement. Generally speaking the following categories were excluded:

- Senior positions characterized by the incumbent having "head of a branch" responsibilities pursuant to Section 5(2) of The Public Service Act.
- All departmental personnel officers and professional staff of the central personnel office.
- Employees who have significant responsibilities in the control and direction of staff particularly in areas where immediate action on problems of discipline is a definite factor such as in gaols and institutions. Positions of Wardens are an example of this.

In all about 250 positions of the work force have been excluded. Throughout the year every possible effort was made to ensure that the departments had an opportunity to participate in this vital area of the collective agreement. Frequent meetings were held with departmental personnel officers, and deputy ministers were kept fully informed.

Set out below are a few examples of specific items considered negotiable where they relate to basic employee rights or entitlements, and conversely, items which are not negotiable due to the discretion allowed in their application.

Negotiable and included in the collective agreement

- upon appointment, no employee shall receive less than the minimum salary rate for the class to which his position is allocated
- upon promotion or reclassification an employee shall receive an increase of at least one increment in the pay scale
- upon his anniversary date an employee shall be eligible to receive one increment if his conduct and performance is judged satisfactory
- the number of hours of work per week is negotiable and stated in the collective agreement
- employees who qualify for overtime are entitled to overtime pay at the rate negotiated

Not negotiable and excluded from the collective agreement

- the Public Service Commissioner may authorize a higher rate depending on qualifications, experience exigencies of recruitment, etc.
- the Deputy Minister may award more than one increment depending on a variety of factors and supporting guidelines
- the Deputy Minister may recommend more than one increment
- the actual hours of work i.e. from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. is reserved as a prerogative of the government
- the department has the option of awarding time off in lieu of payment within 60 days of the time so worked

As this report is written, scheduled meetings of the parties to the agreement are again under way. Current attention is being given to the design of a grievance procedure that will achieve the desired result having regard for the unique nature of the bargaining unit and the new role of the Joint Council. While we want to proceed with a view to completing the full agreement without undue delay we want to make certain that this most important undertaking is given the thought and consideration it requires.

CLASSIFICATION AND PAY

It is the policy of the Government of Alberta to determine compensation levels by the relative worth of positions, and to maintain them relative to prevailing rates at a point sufficient to recruit and retain experienced and qualified staff.

Programming our work within the above terms of reference resulted in 1966 being a busy and rewarding year in which we met immediate requirements and made significant starts in several long range objectives.

An extensive review of procedures and forms used in communicating position classification data, pay grade assignment changes and employee directed information between the Personnel Administration Office, the Department and the employee resulted in the implementation of more effective methods and procedures and the introduction of revised forms. The most significant revision was made in the method of reporting job content. The employee prepared classification questionnaire was replaced by a management prepared job description. This new method reinforces management's right and responsibility to determine and assign duties and responsibilities and to describe the work performed.

Two new members were added to the professional staff complement, but unfortunately three experienced members left the service for employment in other areas of personnel administration. Individual work assignments therefore continued to be heavy and diversified, yet, production remained high and progress was made on the development of new programmes.

All members of the staff participated in the development and presentation of the in-service training programme which covered Classification and Pay Division functions.

Staff members travelled extensively throughout the province auditing positions and dealing with public relations aspects of the classification and pay programmes. Discussions were held with many employees and supervisory officials of the various departments. This direct contact resulted in an improved understanding and appreciation of the principles and practices of wage and salary administration.

The office was represented at a Federal-Provincial technical meeting on classification and pay sponsored by the Federal Government and at a seminar on pay administration sponsored by the Public Personnel Association.

During the year classification and pay information and technical assistance were provided to 25 outside agencies and private firms. Pay review services were also extended to the Research Council of Alberta, the Alberta Liquor Control Board and the Alberta Treasury Branches.

The co-operation and participation extended by Department Personnel Officers and Branch Officials facilitated considerably, the effective handling of classification and pay matters.

Position Classification

The position classification plan was kept up-to-date by conducting resurveys on a class or organizational unit basis, by considering requests for review and by allocating newly established positions. The Manual of Class Specifications was updated in February and August and provided current information on the make-up of classes and class series structures.

Resurveys were conducted on either an organization unit basis or on a class series basis in all Departments of the Government. A major resurvey of 3200 positions in the clerical class series was undertaken in March of 1966 and is scheduled for completion by mid 1967.

A total of 757 position classification review requests were processed resulting in 539 allocation changes.

The Classification Appeal Board considered 295 position classification appeals during the year. The Board rejected 92 for not being properly constituted appeals and refused 203.

The classification plan expanded during the year with 82 classes being added and 27 abolished resulting in a total of 957 classes as of December 31st, 1966. Several complete class series were established for the newly formed Department of Youth.

Pay Administration

We continued to compile and maintain pay data from a variety of sources and detailed pay surveys were conducted in co-operation with other agencies and jurisdictions.

A comprehensive fringe benefit survey was also conducted. The data compiled were useful to our office and well received by the many contributing organizations.

The 1965 agreement between the Government and the Alberta Civil Service Association established pay rates which were to have remained in effect until March 31st, 1967. However, unforeseen developments in the economy necessitated a general pay review in the latter part of 1966 and adjustments were made effective October 1st of that year.

This review resulted in a \$6,752,976 or 11.3% increase in the annual payroll. This total includes the cost of interim increases granted to 24 hospital classes in June.

Staff Establishments

Staff establishment activities were confined to a review of the estimates and the provision of information to the Deputy Provincial Treasurer. The information was used to assess the need for position creations, particularly where positions existed, but had been vacant for an extended period of time.

The importance of exercising meaningful control over staff establishment is well appreciated. The development of a programme to meet this requirement will be considered in the coming year.

A total of 1452 permanent positions were created and 50 were abolished during the year leaving a balance of 15,142 as of December 31st, 1966. In addition slightly less than 500 temporary positions were established to meet emergent situations; these exist for limited periods ranging from a few weeks to several months.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

It is the policy of the Government of Alberta to select employees on the basis of qualifications required for the job including education, experience, aptitude and like attributes. Every present employee has the right to be considered for advancement when new applicants are considered for initial employment.

In recognition of the Government's responsibility as an employer to its citizens, as shareholders, the Personnel Administration Office seeks to attract, recruit and objectively select, without discrimination, those applicants who may be expected to make the best contribution to the Service. It will of course, consider and assess their ability to satisfactorily discharge the duties of the position for which they are competing, as well as their potential to proceed to positions of increased responsibilities.

It was pointed out in the Public Service Commissioner's report for 1965 that in the interest of building a true career service in the Government of Alberta, particular attention would be paid to the schools, with considerable emphasis on career day visits and screening programs at these institutions, in order to create in future candidates an early and sincere interest in employment with the Government. That procedure was in fact pursued and met with considerable success.

During the year of 1966, the authority for the selection of Social Workers was delegated to the Department of Public Welfare. This is the first of the movement of authority for selection for several classes to departmental officials. Naturally, uniform standards must be maintained, and these will be ensured by auditing selection procedures on a periodic basis.

Several high schools were visited in the Edmonton metropolitan area, and from these efforts over one hundred and fifty students were placed in various branches of the Service.

The volume of testing and competitions has increased considerably. The advertising campaigns conducted to attract potential employees have been more extensive. This is due to a much greater emphasis on advertising as a tool to attract interest, and to increased growth, creating demands on the selection staff to provide greater numbers of suitably qualified candidates. This trend is reflected in the Calgary branch also. There the number of competitions and tests conducted, as well as staff placements made, have more than doubled in the past twelve months. In November of 1966 it became necessary to make that office responsible for advertising Calgary Government vacancies in the newspapers of that city; while at the same time they were provided with equipment to enable them to do most of their own office printing.

It is expected that early in 1967, with the acquirement of new staff, the Calgary branch will further relieve the Edmonton office of all advertising for Calgary positions.

A program of bursary assistance for students attending the Institutes of Technology at Edmonton and Calgary was one of the major innovations during 1966. This program was designed to augment the supply of technology graduates for positions in the Public Service. The scarcity of trained technologists is one of the severest problems facing any employer today and the Province of Alberta is no exception. When graduates from this program are available for employment in the Service, the current shortage should be greatly alleviated. A beneficial by-product of this program is the provision of opportunities for a large number of young men and women to attend these Institutes subject to reduced financial strain.

The design of the program provided that recruitment of bursary candidates would be from the areas of the Province where advanced educational facilities were limited, and employment opportunities for trained personnel were also limited.

Over eighty high schools in rural areas of the province were visited. Over three hundred high school students were interviewed and from this base approximately forty students were selected to participate in the program. The initial phase of the program consists of employment in a technical area upon completion of high school, prior to

attending the Institute. During the academic terms the candidates attend the Institutes. In the summer recess between first and second year, the candidates are employed in areas of the Public Service where the skills developed during first year will be utilized. Upon completion of the program the student will be employed by the Province of Alberta in the various branches requiring technology graduates.

During the academic terms, the student is provided with financial assistance sufficient to cover expenses of room and board. While employed in the Service, the student is paid at the prevailing rate in the technical field. This provides the student with the opportunity to acquire the necessary monies for tuition and books each year.

The recruiting program at the universities of Western Canada was intensified to meet the increased competition for the graduates. Most disciplines required by the Government of Alberta are in short supply. Despite this the Provincial Service was able to secure young professionals in sufficient numbers to maintain the existing programs and expand programs where required. Particularly heavy demand for staff was experienced in the Technical Institutes, and in the newly created Department of Youth, the staffing of which is not yet complete.

TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

It is the policy of the Government of Alberta to afford employees opportunity for advancement through increased knowledge, education, training and experience. Employees are encouraged to attend approved courses which may enhance their ability and hence their value to the Service.

In 1966 the design and planning of a comprehensive manpower planning program for the Government of Alberta, as an employer, was undertaken. The purpose of such a program is to provide information to facilitate long-range approaches to staff shortage problems, and enable the organization to identify and meet future needs in the selection, training and development areas.

This innovation embraces many elements and is a long-term, continuous process. The first step, an inventory of education and skills possessed by employees, was completed in the Department of Public Welfare as a pilot project. The ensuing steps in the process will consist of organization planning through a forecast of future program demands, a comprehensive performance evaluation system to determine the potential of the human resources, and how well organizational goals are being met, and then the ultimate manpower planning - a matching of what is present with what is desired, and the techniques to be used to fill the gaps.

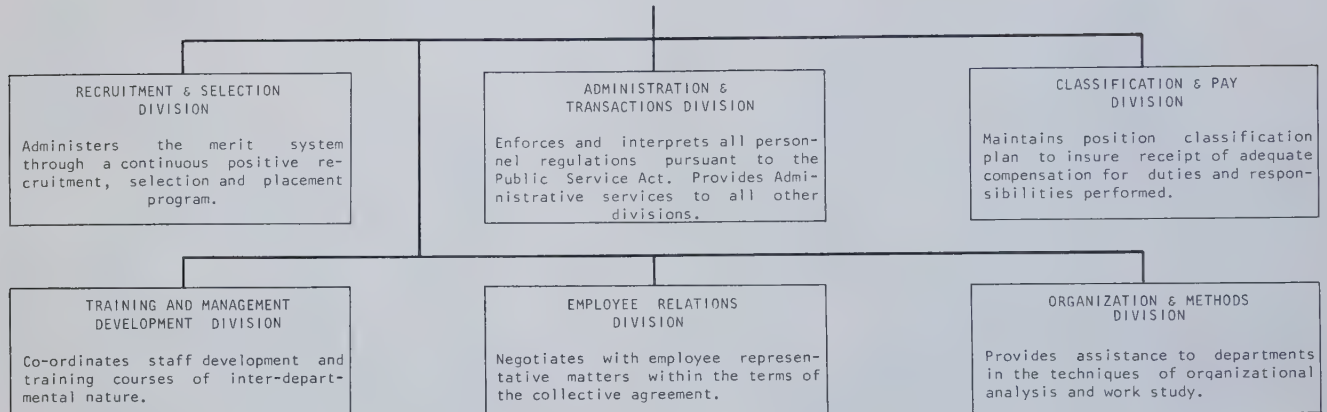
Though this program is in the initial stages, it holds considerable promise as a means of reducing staff shortages, and

providing a basis for meeting problems in staffing at the time they occur.

In early 1966 a survey of the provisions for education leave made by a large sample of public service jurisdictions in North America was conducted. The results of the survey show the Province of Alberta providing many advantages to employees not enjoyed by employees elsewhere in the public service. An additional survey was made of the provisions for leave of absence for Canadian teachers in conjunction with the Alberta School Trustees' Association.

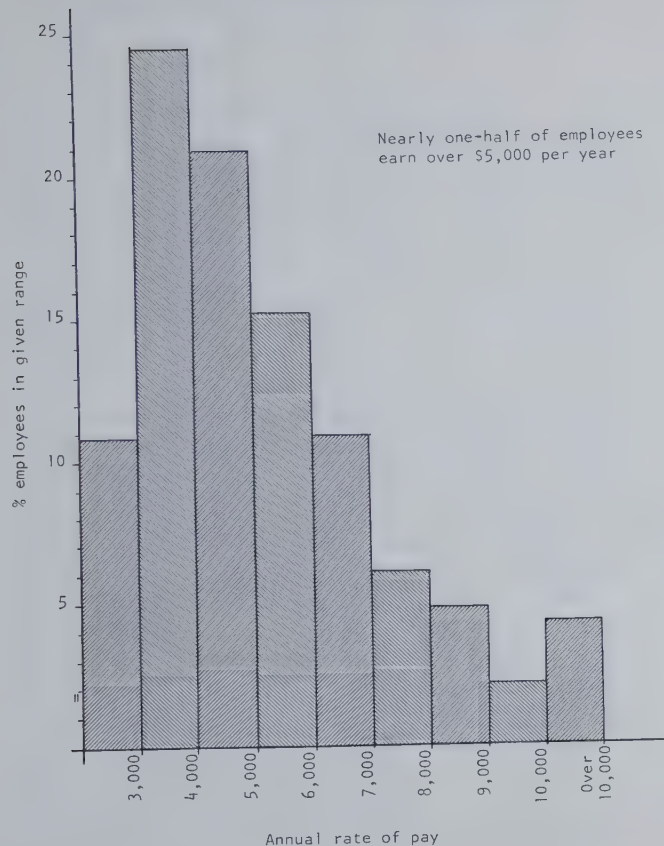
During 1966 the Government of Alberta formalized a plan of course subsidization, which provides assistance in meeting tuition costs of courses taken by employees for the purpose of improving the present or future performance on the job. This, coupled with the present assistance during leave of absence for education purposes, provides a package of aid to employees for improvement that is in the forefront of employer provisions.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

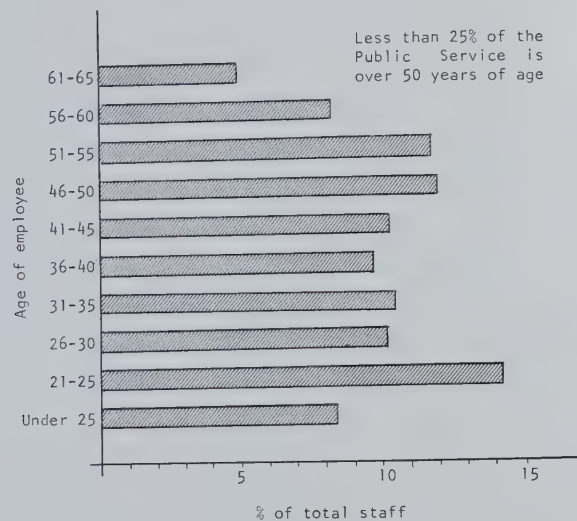


ORGANIZATION OF PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - DECEMBER 31ST, 1966

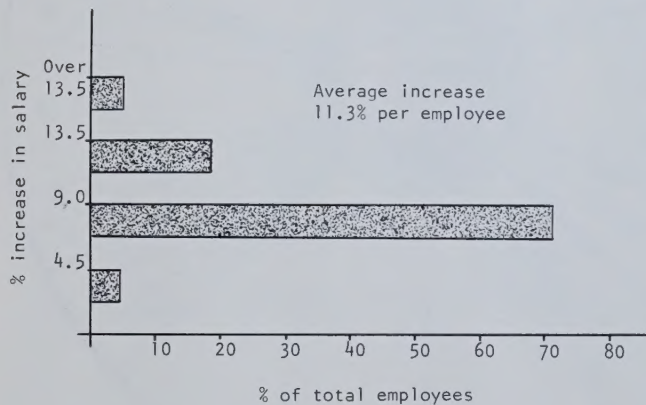
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WITHIN GIVEN RANGES



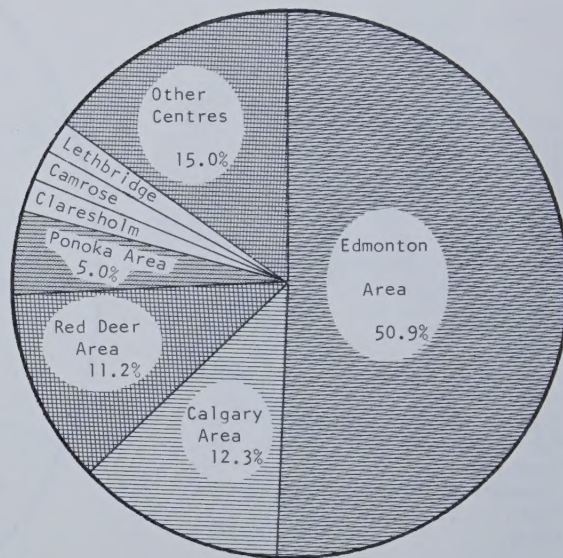
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC SERVICE



PAY INCREASES TO EMPLOYEES OCTOBER 1, 1966



DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEES
BY GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

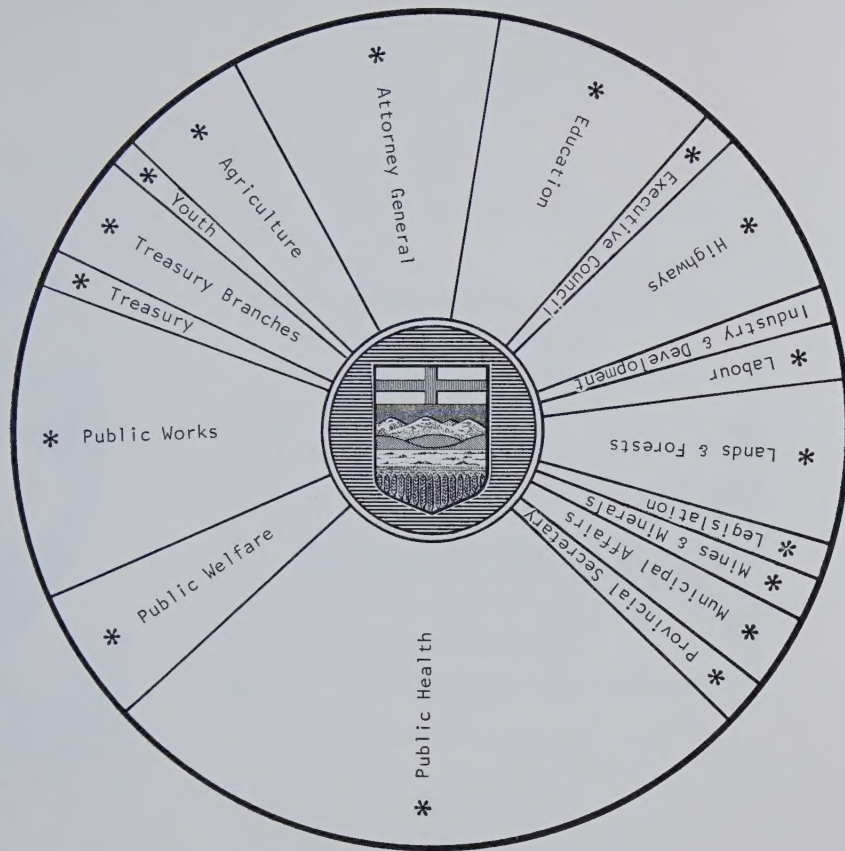


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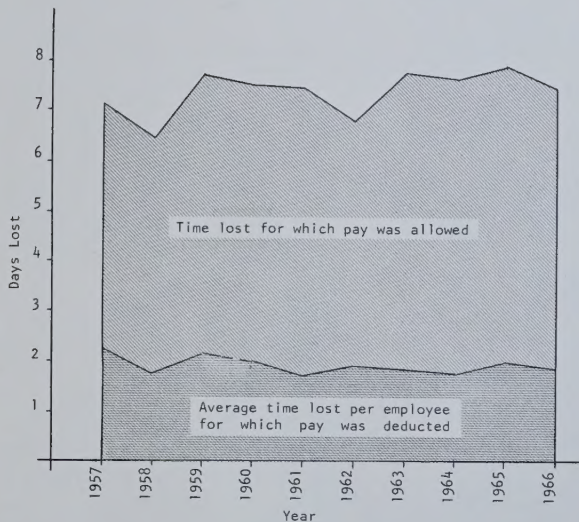
Centres shown have a minimum of
300 employees headquartered there

STAFF COMPLEMENT BY DEPARTMENT
December 31, 1966

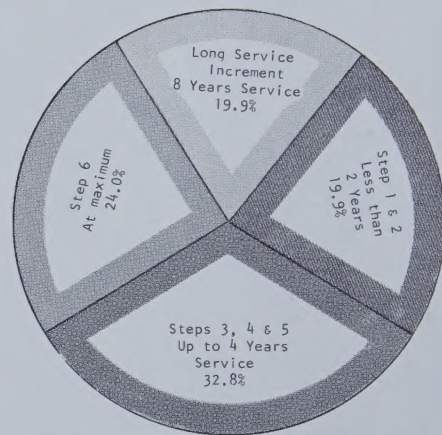
Agriculture	765
Attorney General	1527
Education	1373
Executive Council	104
Highways	1055
Industry & Development	159
Labour	332
Lands & Forests	962
Legislation	212
Mines & Minerals	234
Municipal Affairs	391
Provincial Secretary	208
Public Health	3942
Public Welfare	824
Public Works	1813
Treasury	144
Treasury Branches	562
Youth	17
TOTAL	14614



AVERAGE TIME LOST PER EMPLOYEE



These data are drawn from a sample of the Service, and show that in 1966 the average time lost per employee was 7.38 days, of which 5.56 days was time lost with pay. This represents approximately 2.5% of the days in the working year, or a payroll cost of over 1.5 million dollars annually.



% OF EMPLOYEES AT EACH POINT IN PAY RANGE

December 31, 1966

AUG 11 1950

